Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada
Santé Canada et l'Agence de la santé publique du Canada
Canada

Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada

Guidelines on Public Engagement

Health Canada is the federal department responsible for helping the people of Canada maintain and improve their health. We assess the safety of drugs and many consumer products, help improve the safety of food, and provide information to Canadians to help them make healthy decisions. We provide health services to First Nations people and to Inuit communities. We work with the provinces to ensure our health care system serves the needs of Canadians.

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PART A: OVERVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

These Guidelines provide staff at Health Canada (HC) and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) with detailed information and guidance about how to execute public engagement activities.

Public engagement is an important part of the democratic process and allows HC and PHAC to fulfill key responsibilities. It enables us to:

- Foster information exchange and knowledge sharing to improve the understanding of health issues and build relationships among interested and affected parties.
- Facilitate discussions between HC and PHAC and individuals, groups and organizations, external to the Government of Canada, to provide opportunities to shape government policies and decisions.
- Consider the feedback and perspectives of individuals and groups in the development or assessment of government policies, programs, services and regulatory initiatives in order to inform decisions.
- Enable informed decision-making that ultimately fulfills the mandates of HC and PHAC and improves the health and safety of Canadians.

In recent years, the Government of Canada has placed increasing emphasis on openness and transparency, as reflected in Health Canada's Regulatory Transparency and Openness Framework and related initiatives. Digital engagement has changed the nature and scope of how we consult the public. The use of social media channels and online consultation tools has provided new ways for Canadians to participate in and learn about health issues and to interact with the Government of Canada. This shift offers expanding opportunities for engagement but also creates expectations that the Government of Canada will engage more widely.

Engaging with the public is an important part of our work and as such, we conduct a broad range of public engagement activities on a variety of health issues. The input obtained during public engagement guides our discussions and informs our decision-making on policy and program development, service delivery, and statutory and regulatory initiatives.

The Guidelines reflect our commitment to our responsibilities as outlined in the *Policy on Communications and Federal Identity*, the *Guidelines for Effective Regulatory Consultations* and the *Aboriginal Consultation and Accommodation - Updated Guidelines for Federal Officials to Fulfill the Duty to Consult*. This guidance also supports the kind of organizations we want Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada to be as we advance our mandates, organizations that adapt and evolve in response to the needs of Canadians.

2. PURPOSE

The Guidelines aim to strengthen public engagement at HC and PHAC by providing staff with guidance that promotes effectiveness and best practices, and allows for flexibility to address varying needs for conducting engagement. This guidance also serves to foster a culture of public engagement across both organizations as we continue to enhance our engagement practices and leverage new technologies and innovative opportunities to engage with Canadians.

Included are a definition and continuum of public engagement, principles, and a step-by-step process guide to help staff plan, implement, report on, and evaluate public engagement activities. Staff are encouraged to use this guidance whenever they undertake these activities.

3. SCOPE

The Guidelines provide guidance to staff on how to conduct effective and consistent public engagement. It is important to understand the differences between public engagement and public opinion research (POR)[a]. Public engagement is an activity involving a two-way discussion and exchange of information (see Section 4). Public opinion research is an environmental analysis activity where the objective is one-way data collection of opinions, attitudes, perceptions, judgments, feelings, ideas, reactions, or views.

If the activity that is to be undertaken is POR, the approach is different than that for public engagement as per the *Directive on the Management of Communications* and is out of the scope of this document. Additionally, if the input that is being sought to inform decision-making is through an established external advisory body (EAB)[b], the *Health Canada Policy*

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[a] **Public opinion research** is the planned collection, by or for a department, of opinions, attitudes, perceptions, judgments, feelings, ideas, reactions, or views of any target audience with the help of research instruments such as questionnaires (with or without interviews) or discussion guides for moderators.

[b] **External advisory bodies** are established by the Minister or the Department/Agency to provide advice on specific medical, scientific, technical, policy, or program matters within the scope of their mandate. All members are external to the federal government and provide advice as a group, and not as individuals or representatives of organizations.

on External Advisory Bodies (2011) and the *Public Health Agency of Canada's Policy on External Advisory Bodies (2011)* will apply.

The Guidelines can also be used to guide discussions and engagement activities with aboriginal groups, including First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and their respective organizations. In these cases, it is important to distinguish between: (i) discussion and engagement activities which take place for statutory/policy and good governance reasons and that are described in these Guidelines, and (ii) consultations which the Crown is obligated to undertake pursuant to the common law duty to consult under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* ("Duty to Consult"). The Duty to Consult is not the subject of these Guidelines, and references to "consultation" elsewhere in these Guidelines are not meant to refer to the Duty to Consult.

The Duty to Consult does not apply in every case and only arises when there is proposed Crown conduct that could have an adverse impact on potential or established aboriginal or treaty rights (which rights are or would be recognized and affirmed by s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*). In a case where the Duty to Consult may be in question, advice should be sought from Legal Services. If the Duty to Consult may apply, Health Canada and PHAC may seek assistance from Indigenous and Northern Development Canada (INDC). Where the Duty to Consult is confirmed, the process set out in the *Aboriginal Consultation and Accommodation - Updated Guidelines for Federal Officials to Fulfill the Duty to Consult* will apply.

4. DEFINITION OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT[c]

Public engagement activities vary in how they are conducted, but most will include the key elements outlined in the following definition.

> Planned two-way discussions with individuals, organizations, or groups, external to the Government of Canada, designed to gather input, clarify information and foster understanding among those interested and affected by an issue, decision or action and to better inform Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada's decision-making.

Public engagement activities can include, for example:

- Citizens, patients, consumers and consumer groups.
- Stakeholders, professionals, academia, business and industry, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, professional associations and licensing bodies.

These activities may also include provinces, territories and municipalities, and Aboriginal groups and organizations, when they are included in discussions with external individuals, organizations or groups.

Although *"public engagement"* and *"consultation"* are sometimes used interchangeably, *"public engagement"* has a broader meaning than *"consultation,"* and reflects a wider variety of interactions and outcomes.

5. A CONTINUUM OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement may consist of a wide variety of activities that range from informing the public to engaging in dialogue. A 'Continuum of Public Engagement' shown in Figure 1 depicts four levels of increasing engagement including some examples of engagement approaches.[d] The Continuum is intended to outline what is involved at each level and to

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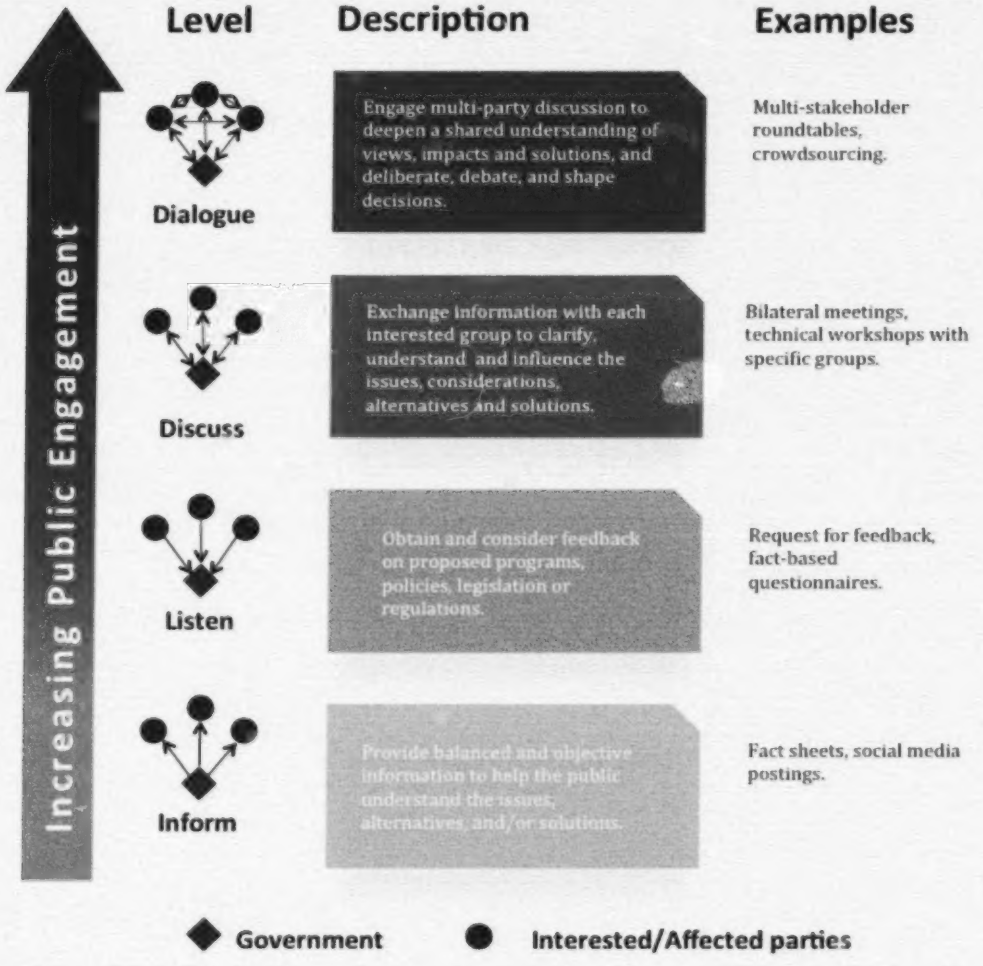
[c] The term "two-way" refers to the flow of information that occurs during the public engagement process, i.e., that there is an input and an output of information. It is not meant to refer to the number of participants (i.e., specifically two individuals, groups or organizations) that are involved in the engagement process at a particular time.

[d] A level of engagement that is referred to as "empower" or "partner" is not reflected in this Continuum. The goal of empowerment and partnerships is to share decision-making. The Guidelines focus on public engagement where, although there

help staff consider the most appropriate level(s) of engagement to use depending on the objectives.

Figure 1 A Continuum of Public Engagement


Level
Description
Examples
Increasing Public Engagement
Dialogue
Engage multi-party discussion to deepen a shared understanding of views, impacts and solutions, and deliberate, debate, and shape decisions.
Multi-stakeholder roundtables, crowdsourcing.
Discuss
Exchange information with each interested group to clarify, understand and influence the issues, considerations, alternatives and solutions.
Bilateral meetings, technical workshops with specific groups.
Listen
Obtain and consider feedback on proposed programs, policies, legislation or regulations.
Request for feedback, fact-based questionnaires.
Inform
Provide balanced and objective information to help the public understand the issues, alternatives, and/or solutions.
Fact sheets, social media postings.
Government
Interested/Affected parties

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is the opportunity for involvement and influence in decision-making, the final decision rests with HC or PHAC. Therefore, the level of empowerment or partnering is beyond the scope of these Guidelines.

The levels of public engagement are not necessarily sequential. Public engagement can consist of one activity, such as information sharing, or dialogue, or a series of activities of varying types and levels of engagement at different points in the decision-making process. Public engagement activities on significant issues may include overlapping initiatives that combine activities at different levels of the continuum depending on the participants or the stage of the decision-making process. Early engagements may focus on informing the public, while later stages may focus on discussion and dialogue.

Typically, the level of engagement should increase with the complexity and scope of the project, and level of public interest or impact. For example, as a general guideline, the greater the potential impact on interested and affected participants, the higher the level of engagement needed. In addition, highly technical issues of narrow relevance to informed stakeholders may require a focused and detailed engagement at the dialogue level, while larger issues of wider interest may require larger engagement activities to inform, listen and discuss.

Different types of participants may require different levels of engagement. While some groups may be ready and willing to engage in dialogue with each other, others may need more information first or prefer simply to communicate their views directly to decision-makers.

6. PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Guidelines are based on the following principles that guide our engagement activities, ensuring that they are meaningful, effective, and consistent. These principles are fundamental to establishing successful public engagement.

Open and Inclusive: Engagement activities are promoted and designed to ensure the involvement and consider the views and perspectives of a wide variety of participants who are interested in or affected by HC or PHAC initiatives.

Timely and Transparent: The purpose and objective of engagement activities should be clearly communicated and planned with adequate timelines. The results of engagement activities, and how input was considered in decision-making, should be made available to participants through different channels in easy to access formats.

Responsive and Relevant: Engagement activities are participant-focussed and adapted to targeted audiences. The consultation issues and documents are appropriate to achieve the objectives of the engagement activities.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following figure describes the roles and responsibilities of various staff at HC and PHAC related to public engagement.

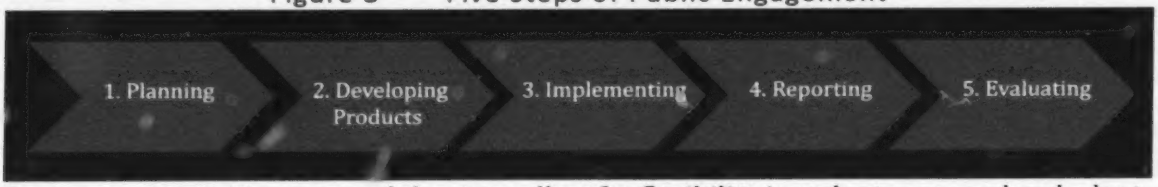
Figure 2 Roles and Responsibilities

Deputy Heads	• Ensuring engagement is integral to development and implementation of policies, programs, regulatory initiatives and services • Ensuring public engagement outcomes are integrated into decision-making processes
Assistant Deputy Ministers	• Approving or delegating engagement activities for complex, sensitive, and/or high profile issues under their authority • Approving or budgetary expenses such as travel, hospitality, or honoraria in support of engagement
Head of Communications	• Ensuring engagement activities align with *Policy on Communications and Federal Identity* and other relevant directives and guidelines • Ensuring effective engagement processes through provision of integrated expertise and advice
Programs / Directorates	• Conducting effective engagement activities with appropriate financial and human resource allocation • Ensuring collaboration on engagement activities with appropriate functional areas and regional offices
Regions	• Collaborating and providing a regional perspective, advice and expertise on engagement activities
Legal Services	• Providing legal advice and expertise related to engagement activities
Privy Council Office & Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat	• Promoting and supporting a consultative culture across the federal government and in the public service as well as oversight responsibilities pertaining to Government of Canada consultations

PART B: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS GUIDE

The Public Engagement Process Guide is a key component of the Guidelines. A public engagement process generally involves five main steps including planning, developing products, implementing, reporting, and evaluating. This process guide describes the five steps, including key questions, key considerations and tasks, to consider as best practices when conducting an engagement activity.

Figure 3 Five Steps of Public Engagement



Engagement activities vary and the steps allow for flexibility in order to respond and adapt to changing circumstances.

STEP 1 PLANNING

Key Questions:

- Is public engagement appropriate and/or required?
- What is the purpose of engagement?
- What are the key decisions to be made?
- What are the potential risks and implications?
- Have I identified the appropriate participants?
- Are there important timelines to consider?
- What is the most appropriate engagement approach?
- How will feedback be considered in the decision-making process?

1.1 Identify the key issue

Planning is the most important step in organizing a public engagement project. It begins from a clear understanding of the policy, program, service, or regulatory initiative that you are working on, including the items in the following list. Consider the following questions when identifying the key issue:

- What is the nature and scope of the issue?
- Is there a decision to be made or an action to be taken?
- What are the motivating factors for the decision to engage the public (e.g., information sharing, policy development, and statutory or regulatory requirements)?

Defining the key issue will allow you to decide whether a public engagement activity is appropriate and/or required, and if so, why. For example, some common triggers for public engagement include:

- To inform program and policy development.
- To contribute to key government priorities or commitments.
- To fulfill statutory and regulatory initiatives.
- To foster information exchange, knowledge sharing or relationship building.

As well, there may be other reasons for initiating or not conducting the activity (e.g., good governance, and contextual factors). When engagement is not required, consider the potential benefit and value of engaging the public against the costs in terms of resources, time and risk.

1.2 Understand the context

Understanding the broader contextual environment will help to define the scope of the engagement process and the type of approach needed. Examining the background and context helps to identify strategic considerations, opportunities, and risks that might affect the engagement activity. Some questions to consider include:

- Is there a Departmental or Agency requirement to engage with the public (or stakeholders) on this issue?
- Is there ministerial and senior management support and consistency with key government priorities?
- What is the level of the public's knowledge and understanding of the issue?
- What is the level of public and media interest and potential participant positions (i.e., what they may propose, their perspectives on the issue, and potential sources of conflict)?
- Are there potential impacts and risk(s) associated with the issue?
- What are the outcomes and expectations created by any previous engagement activities on this issue?
- Are there any related high profile issues that may impact obtaining public feedback on the issue?
- Are there regional, political, social, economic, and international factors to take into account?

1.3 Clearly define the purpose, objectives and expected outcomes

Successful public engagement requires a clear definition of purpose, objectives and expected outcomes.

The **purpose** should set out the problem or issue that needs to be addressed. It is a broad, brief statement of intent that provides an overarching vision for the engagement. Some key questions to help you determine the purpose include:

- Why are you engaging with the public?
- Do you need input to inform the development of a policy or program?
- What change (s) do you anticipate as a result of the engagement?

Objectives are specific strategies or steps taken to achieve the purpose and should be timely, clear, realistic, relevant and measurable. They provide focus to the engagement and a basis upon which to evaluate the activity at its completion. Some key questions to help you determine the objectives include:

- What are you trying to achieve by engaging with the public?
- What information and feedback do you need to know, and why?
- How will the feedback be used to achieve the purpose?

Outcomes are the end result(s) you aim to achieve with the engagement activity. They need to be realistic, appropriate to the issue, and have a clear link to the purpose and objectives.

1.4 Identify the budget and resources available

During this step you can determine if there are any potential costs associated with the public engagement and plan a budget accordingly. It's important to determine this early so that you can make any adjustments if necessary. The specific costs will vary for each engagement activity, but some key costs to consider include:

- Meeting preparation such as document creation, translation, review and printing.
- Logistical arrangements such as rental of venue (i.e., facility), meeting rooms, and technical needs (e.g., audio visual, computer and other equipment).
- Hospitality (i.e., meals, beverages or refreshments).
- Travel and accommodation for participants and/or staff.
- Third-party support such as moderation and/or facilitation services.
- Honoraria for certain participants.

In addition to the budget available, you will need to identify how much staff time may be allocated to the engagement activity, so that you can have a full understanding of the resources required.

Obtaining approvals for any travel and hospitality needs may be necessary at this point. For information on the requirements and approvals for potential travel, hospitality, or conference activities see the Government of Canada's *Directive on Travel, Hospitality, and Conference and Event Expenditures*.

See step 1.9 (Plan the logistical details), for further information on logistical arrangements.

1.5 Initiate internal communication and services

Public engagement activities require collaboration and coordination between the relevant areas of the Department and the Agency. The program or policy area initiating the engagement activity is the lead. Early in the planning stage, the program or policy lead should contact the Departmental and Agency communications staff within the Communication and Public Affairs Branch (CPAB) at consultations@hc-sc.gc.ca to inform them of the activity and to obtain advice and support as needed. Depending on the activity and the specific needs, the relevant functional specialists (e.g., Legal Services or Finance) can also be contacted for assistance if required.

An additional consideration is to determine whether the engagement activity has a regional component (for example if you are trying to reach participants in the regions or across Canada). Regional engagement staff can provide support in planning, regional stakeholder intelligence, developing products, engagement, outreach, implementation, and horizontal coordination across the Health Portfolio and other federal partners in the regions.

Some public engagement issues (i.e., broad horizontal issues impacting multiple departments) will require or benefit from coordination with other government departments, or agencies and they should be engaged early in the planning stage.

1.6 Identify the participants

For effective engagement to occur, it's important to identify and engage the individuals, groups and organizations that are interested in and affected by the policy, program, regulation or service under discussion. These are the people who will make a meaningful contribution to the engagement activity.

Some questions to ask when identifying the participants include the following:

- Who has communicated to government on this issue in the past?
- Who is directly interested in or affected by the issue, whether economically, socially or otherwise?
- How informed on the issue are various potential participants and groups?
- What level of engagement is appropriate given the potential participants? What kind of feedback will we need them to provide?
- Are there factors such as age, gender, geography, sector, ethnicity, or language, which are especially important in this issue?

When designing the engagement process, it's important to ensure open, transparent and inclusive participation. The identification of potential participants should not only involve individuals or groups known to have a general interest in the issue, but it should also include those who could potentially influence the outcome or decision either directly or indirectly. Input should be sought from participants with a broad range of perspectives and experiences, including diverse interest groups. Attention should be paid to reducing barriers to participation through accommodation and/or support to participants so as to promote greater accessibility.

The Consultation and Stakeholder Information Management System (CSIMS) is a tool that staff can use when planning consultation and engagement activities. It is a web-based system that combines a public-facing stakeholder registry with a central repository of information about current and past HC and PHAC public engagement activities. Staff who are planning engagement activities can use the system to help plan their activity, search for potential participants, and communicate information to them. For further information on CSIMS contact CSIMS-Internal@hc-sc.gc.ca.

1.7 Establish timelines

The timelines for the activity, including start and end dates and any relevant deadlines, need to be communicated clearly. Adequate timelines should be given to allow participants reasonable time to prepare and provide input and in some cases, consult others within their organizations. Time needs to be allotted for HC and PHAC to consider the input received in the decision-making process.

The time required to undertake an engagement activity depends on a number of factors including the approach selected and the complexity of the public input required.

Many engagement activities have a fixed timeline or final deadline built-in by legislation, regulations, or previous government commitments. In these cases, a key planning challenge is to allocate the available time to optimize the value of the engagement process.

Some questions to consider when establishing timelines include:

- Is there a fixed timeline or final deadline imposed by legislation, government commitments or other established agreements?
- How much time is needed for the participants to provide input?
- How long will it take to consider the input, and analyse and report the results both internally and externally?
- How much time is required to coordinate with other program areas, directorates, branches, regional offices or other government departments?
- How much time should be allotted for approvals and for travel and hospitality if needed?
- How much time is required to develop and translate materials if needed?

1.8 Choose the appropriate engagement approach

There are a variety of public engagement approaches to consider when planning your engagement activity. These approaches can range from requests for feedback via email, to workshops with specific groups, to multi-stakeholder roundtables. Your purpose, objectives, budget, participants, and timelines determine the best approach for the engagement activity.

Common Examples of Public Engagement Approaches

Approach	Description	Benefits	Challenges
In-person discussion sessions	Participants attend a group session involving presentations and/or discussions.	• Opportunity for stakeholders and decision-makers to meet in person and build relationships. • Effective for assessing preliminary options or ideas.	• More costly and time-consuming than alternatives. • Subject to availability of participants at a specific time and location.
Request for Feedback	A draft document or proposal is emailed or posted online and participants are asked to provide feedback.	• Cost-effective way to receive detailed, considered feedback on drafts or proposals. • Specific information can be obtained in a controlled manner.	• Participants cannot benefit from hearing the different perspectives of others. • Requires planning and resources to summarize and analyse feedback.
Online consultation Tools	Participants join an online forum to share their views with others and discuss issues.	• Opportunity to gain perspectives from participants from regional or remote areas at their convenience. • Flexible approach which can be designed and adapted based on objectives.	• Time consuming to design, deliver, moderate, and monitor. • Format may be unfamiliar to some.

Multiple engagement approaches may be needed to address the needs of different participants. When there is a broad range of potential participants, or they are widely separated geographically, more than one approach may be necessary. For example, discussion sessions across a variety of regions can be combined with a request for written submissions via email. Alternatively, different approaches may be used for participants with subject matter expertise as opposed to those with a more general interest.

Making the information available to the participants and/or the public through a variety of channels in easy to access formats ensures the engagement activity is open, inclusive and transparent.

Using social media channels to promote the engagement activity can broaden its reach and help to ensure it is easily available to participants. HC and PHAC use a range of social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Pinterest to communicate engagement activities.

Wherever possible, build flexibility into your engagement approach. This allows you to adapt to unforeseen circumstances and resolve issues that may arise.

When planning the engagement approach, consider and anticipate the type and volume of input and information that may be expected. You may receive more or less feedback than you anticipated. The approach for the engagement needs to be planned, monitored and adapted to enable effective analysis.

1.9 Plan the logistical details

Planning a public engagement activity typically includes many details such as arranging for the venue (i.e., facility), transportation, accommodations, hospitality, seating arrangements, facilitators, translation, note taking, technology requirements, and accessibility. It is helpful to consult with others who have been involved with the preparation of similar engagement activities in order to gain from their experiences.

The costs to participants, the Department and the Agency should be minimized. For example, the location and timing of engagement activities should be selected to minimize travel for participants and staff. Identify opportunities for remote or virtual presence to facilitate participation.

Refer to section 1.4 (Identify the budget and resources available) for further information on potential expenses associated with the logistics of planning the engagement activity.

1.10 Plan for reporting and evaluating

Before the engagement activity begins, plan how the feedback of public engagement will be considered in decision-making, how and when to report back to participants and decision-makers, and how the activity will be evaluated.

Consider the most appropriate format for reporting back to participants and what information to include so that participants can understand how the feedback was considered in decision-making. Anticipate how you might be able to summarize the feedback received based on themes.

Identify what will be evaluated so that when the engagement activity ends you will be able to measure whether the objectives were met and identify any lessons learned.

Key Questions:

- Do the engagement documents clearly outline the objectives, approach and timelines of the activity?
- Do the documents present a clear picture of the issue(s) and reflect all relevant perspectives?
- Do the engagement documents help to ensure participants are informed to be able to contribute effectively?
- Are the engagement documents available to participants through a variety of channels in easy to access formats?
- Are the final engagement documents and communications products provided in plain language and in both official languages?

2.1 Develop engagement activity documents

In most cases, supporting engagement documents will need to be developed prior to implementing an engagement activity. These may include, for example, backgrounders, issue papers, draft policy proposals, regulatory proposals, discussion guides, technical documents and questionnaires. They should provide sufficient detail to be well-understood so that participants can effectively contribute to the issue(s).

Depending on the engagement document(s) being developed, relevant information can include:

- a clear statement of the objectives and the engagement approach(es);
- which issues are part of the discussion;
- what decisions have been made to date; and
- how the participant's input will be considered in decision-making.

Documents should be written in plain neutral language and avoid unnecessary technical jargon. Final documents should be clearly identified as being from the Government of Canada and participants should be able to obtain documents and participate in discussions in the official language of their choice. To help ensure that all participants have access to the information they need to participate in the engagement activity, they should be made available through a variety of channels and in easy to access formats. This also ensures the engagement is transparent and timely.

CPAB can assist with advice and support in the development of engagement activity documents. If your engagement activity has an online component, you will need to work with CPAB to update the relevant sections of the HC and PHAC websites with the information about the engagement activity.

2.2 Develop communication products

It may be necessary to develop communication products (e.g., media lines, news releases, Qs and As), which should be developed in collaboration with CPAB. Products should be developed in plain language and should be easy to understand. Staff should take into account the necessary internal approval processes and timelines required for these documents. Final communications products for the public, as with engagement documents, need to be clearly identified as being from the Government of Canada and provided in both official languages.

You may also need to develop other communication and outreach products such as letters of invitation, notices to the media or paid advertising. These can be sent or published through the web or directly to targeted stakeholders. Social media channels can also be used to communicate and promote the engagement activity. Communications strategies should take into account all interested and affected organizations, groups and individuals.

Key Questions:

- Have we been clear to participants about the purpose of the engagement?
- Is the information available to participants through a variety of channels or tools?
- Are there any potential adjustments to be made as the activity is monitored?
- Have specific individuals been assigned to capture and preserve the input received, whether written or verbal?

3.1 Informing the public

Once the engagement activity approach has been chosen and designed and the products have been developed, the initiative can be launched. As per the *Policy on Communications and Federal Identity*, it's important to ensure that information about the activity is made publicly available so that Canadians are informed about opportunities to participate in public consultations. It is also good practice and helps to ensure open and transparent communication to include information in the engagement documents or products on how to participate, the feedback that is being sought, and the timelines for the activity.

To inform the public that the activity is taking place, the activity is submitted through CSIMS which ensures that it is reflected on the public facing HC/PHAC consultation calendar. In addition, the CSIMS team will submit the activity to the Consulting with Canadians website.

3.2 Communicate clearly with the participants

Engagement activities will be most successful when participants are clear from the outset regarding:

- The objectives and the engagement approach;
- Which issues are in the scope of the discussion;
- Which related issues or areas are not in the scope of the discussion;
- What decisions have been made to date, and which decisions are to be made; and,
- How the participant's input will be considered in decision-making.

If the scope of the discussion and the options are not clearly defined, participants may spend their time discussing issues or options which are not relevant to the engagement activity. When the scope is clearly defined, organizers can more easily refocus the discussion when needed.

3.3 Monitor the activity

During implementation, your public engagement activity should be monitored to ensure it is meeting the intended objectives. Be ready to adjust course based on feedback received or organise additional activities to consider new input or reach consensus on particular issues. This will be facilitated by building flexibility into the process. Keep a record of any suggested changes that were made to the activity in order to enable continuous improvement.

STEP 4 REPORTING

Key Questions

- Have I documented the activity to demonstrate that participants have been heard?
- Have I considered how to analyse the feedback?
- How will I inform decision-makers about the results of the engagement?
- What is the best approach for sharing the report with the participants and/or the public?

4.1 Analyse the feedback

Public engagement activities typically create several types of output, both written and verbal. Analysis is required to align and summarize this feedback in a concise manner. The analysis should identify what was heard and also reflect the importance placed on various issues or ideas by participants.

For small engagement activities, it may be possible to analyze the feedback simply by reviewing it and taking notes. For larger engagement activities with more feedback, however, a systematic approach will be needed to ensure that the analysis is objective and balanced, and that the appropriate time is allocated to manage the volume of feedback.

The analysis should make it possible to identify any themes, based on overall similarities or differences in feedback between types of participants.

4.2 Report to decision-makers

It is important to provide decision-makers with an objective, accurate assessment of the engagement activity, including contributions by participants. Reporting formats vary widely, but the key is to provide a clear and concise picture of the most important participant concerns and positions, as well as any underlying themes, trends, or important highlights. If contentious issues are raised, they should be noted.

4.3 Report back to participants and/or the public

The extent of reporting back should be proportionate to the size, complexity, and potential impact of the engagement activity. Participants should receive a report including a brief summary of the engagement process and how the collective input received will be considered in decision-making, and an outline of next steps.

More comprehensive reports may include in-depth information such as replies to specific questions in a summary format, or in the case of a regulatory initiative, a Regulatory Impact Analysis Statement (RIAS).

As a best practice, the report should be made available to participants. Reporting back demonstrates openness and transparency by informing participants that their contributions were heard and considered by decision-makers. To be as inclusive as possible, in some instances reports may also be made available to a wider audience such as the public by posting the report on the HC and PHAC websites and/or by other means, as appropriate.

4.4 Ensure appropriate record keeping

All information shared or collected during an engagement activity should be documented, organized and archived. A proper strategy for tracking and archiving all records will help ensure that they are available to serve as a point of reference or lessons learned for other colleagues who may be undertaking similar engagement activities. These records will also be used from time to time when responding to information requests from senior management.

CSIMS is a valuable tool to help record and track information on past and current engagement activities. For further information on CSIMS contact CSIMS-Internal@hc-sc.gc.ca.

Key Questions

- Was the chosen engagement approach the best one given the purpose, objectives, budget, participants, and timelines?
- Were the timelines adequate?
- Was a summary report completed in a timely manner?
- Were the objectives for the public engagement met?
- What should, and should not be, repeated in the future, and why?

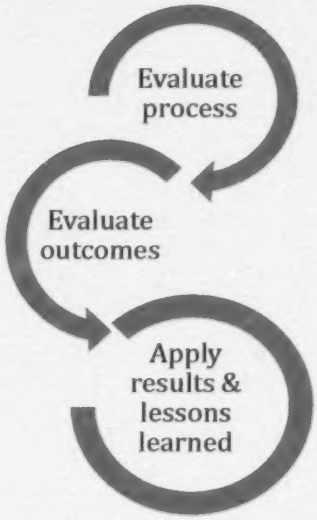
5.1 Evaluate the engagement process and outcomes

The **process** and **outcomes** of an engagement process should be evaluated in order to determine the success of the engagement and to enable continuous improvement. Ideally, during the planning phase (see step 1.10) you put some thought into how you might evaluate the activity to determine its success.

When you are evaluating the **process** you are determining how well Steps 1 to 4, i.e., Planning, Developing Products, Implementing, and Reporting, actually worked. Some considerations include:

- Whether the engagement activity was effectively planned;
- Whether the participants were generally satisfied with the engagement approach (e.g. participants' roles were clear, information was clearly communicated, and participants were able to effectively provide their input);
- Whether the timelines were adequate; and
- If a reporting back process was put into place.

Figure 4 Evaluate the Process and Outcomes



Evaluating the **outcomes** is a more in-depth process than assessing the process. You are examining how the results of the engagement activity impacted the decision. Some considerations include:

- Whether the objectives and expected outcomes were met;
- Whether the necessary feedback was received;
- How the feedback was considered and its impact on decision-making; and
- Whether any unintended results occurred.

5.2 Identify and apply the results and lessons learned

Evaluation facilitates future public engagement in several key ways.

- Identifying what worked, what did not work, and why.
- Refining the engagement process for the issue and participants.
- Ensuring efficient resource allocation.
- Ensuring accountability in decision-making.

Evaluation should be built into the initial planning and should also be an on-going process, allowing staff to measure the effectiveness and impact of the activity throughout the engagement effort.

Having measured the success of the approach taken and the results gained, it's possible to consider what can be improved. Evaluation can help to inform the Department, the Agency, and the participants and/or public of the value of the activity and can serve to facilitate continuous improvement.

PART C: REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

While the Guidelines provide support for public engagement, the following related documents might also be useful.

1. *Aboriginal Consultation and Accommodation - Updated Guidelines for Federal Officials to Fulfill the Duty to Consult*
2. *Access to Information Act*
3. Assembly of First Nations-First Nation and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) Engagement Protocol
4. *Cabinet Directive on Regulatory Management*
5. *Policy on Communications and Federal Identity*
6. *Directive on the Management of Communications*
7. *Guidelines for Effective Regulatory Consultations*
8. *Health Canada Interpretation Policy*
9. Inuit Health Approach
10. *Official Languages Act*
11. *Public Health Agency of Canada Interpretation Policy*
12. *Privacy Act*

Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada have developed other documents, tools and resources for conducting public engagement. Some examples include:

1. Health Canada Policy Toolkit for Public Involvement in Decision-Making (2000)
2. HPFB Public Involvement Framework
3. Health Canada's Decision Making Framework for Identifying, Assessing and Managing Health Risks

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), an international organization advancing the practice of public participation, also provides useful resources on public engagement.

PART D: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

For the purposes of the HC and PHAC Guidelines on Public Engagement, the following words are given the meanings below:

Aboriginal Consultation	As defined in ***Aboriginal Consultation and Accommodation - Updated Guidelines for Federal Officials to Fulfill the Duty to Consult***, the duty to consult "arises when the Crown has knowledge, real or constructive, of the potential existence of the aboriginal right or title and contemplates conduct that might adversely affect it."
Continuum of Public Engagement	A range of public engagement levels in issues of public interest to inform decision-making. The Guidelines include four levels which increase in the amount of engagement that the public has in decision making, with inform at the lowest level, then increasing from listen, discuss and then to dialogue, at the highest level of engagement. The Continuum helps to identify the level of engagement needed to meet the objectives. The levels are not intended to be sequential.
Dialogue	To engage in a multi-party discussion to deepen a shared understanding of views, impacts and solutions, and deliberate, debate and shape decisions.
Digital engagement	A range of digital online technologies used as part of an engagement activity to facilitate participation.
Discuss	To exchange information with each interested group where there is an opportunity to clarify, understand and influence the issues, considerations, alternatives and solutions.

Empower (or partner)	A level of engagement whereby the goal is to share decision-making.
External advisory body	Established by the Minister of Health or the Department and Agency to provide advice on specific medical, scientific, technical, policy, or program matters within the scope of its mandate. All members are external to the federal government and provide advice as a group, and not as individuals or representatives of organizations.
Evaluation	An assessment of a policy, program, service, or regulatory initiative (e.g., public engagement activity) rationale, implementation, effectiveness, outcomes (intended or unintended), and alternatives with the intent of improving success in achieving the stated objectives and meeting the needs of the target group(s).
Honoraria	In accordance with the Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada Delegation of Financial Signing Authorities, the Department and the Agency have the discretion to offer an honorarium as a token of appreciation for services that would have been provided free of charge. An honorarium is a gratuitous payment and should not be used as an alternative or replacement for salary, wages or contractual payments. There should be no expectation of receiving an honorarium by the recipient, and the use of honoraria payments should be the exception rather than the rule. The operational authority approving each honorarium payment is responsible for determining the appropriateness of each payment and amount, and ensuring that each decision is well documented. Honoraria are not to be paid to public servants or other public officials already receiving salary for the conduct of public business.

Inform	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to help them understand the issues, alternatives, and solutions.
Outcomes	In the context of public engagement, outcomes are the intended and unintended immediate benefits for or changes in skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, values, condition, status, etc., of individuals or populations during or immediately after participation in a public engagement activity.
Performance	Refers to actual achievements measured against defined goals, standards or criteria.
Public engagement	Planned two-way discussions with individuals, organizations, or groups, external to the Government of Canada, designed to gather input and foster understanding among those interested and affected by an issue, decision, or action and to better inform Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada's decision-making.
Public engagement approach	A broad range of strategies, methods, and techniques used to facilitate a variety of interactions with the public for the purpose of information sharing and decision-making.
Public opinion research	As defined in the ***Directive on the Management of Communications***, public opinion research is the one-way systematic collection, by or for the Government of Canada, of opinion-based information of any target audience using quantitative or qualitative methods and techniques such as surveys or focus groups. Public opinion research provides insight and supports decision making. The process used for gathering information usually assumes an expectation and guarantee of anonymity for

	respondents. Public opinion research includes information collected from the public, including private individuals and representatives of businesses or other entities. It involves activities such as the design and testing of collection methods and instruments, data collection, data entry, data coding, and primary data analysis.
Results	The collection of impacts and outcomes associated with a program, policy, service or regulatory initiative (e.g., including a public engagement activity) and relate to what was achieved.
Stakeholders	Individuals, groups or organizations external to the Government of Canada who have a specific interest in, have some influence on, or are affected by, a given policy, program, regulatory initiative or service of a specific Government of Canada department, namely HC or PHAC.
Target audience	The intended audience, i.e., the individuals, groups, or organizations of the public engagement.